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ABSTRACT

This study presents non-scholastic, non-cognitive factors which a previous study at Bronx Community College (BCC) showed were highly related to student persistence: sex, ethnic group, veteran status, age, income, home ownership, size of household, primary language spoken as a child, parental education, educational aspiration level, satisfaction with BCC curriculum, and counseling needs. The data indicates that the proportion of male students exceeded female entrants for the first time since the implementation of open admissions; that almost one-half of the males entering spring semester are veterans; that 62 percent of all entering students are above 21 years of age; that the racial and ethnic distribution among entrants is 50 percent Black, 30 percent Puerto Rican (Spanish surname), 15 percent non-Spanish Caucasian; that the majority of students come from families with less than $7,000 yearly income; that 60-65 percent of their parents did not graduate from high school; that 75 percent aspired to a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and that financial and career-academic counseling are the strongest counseling needs expressed by the students. Twelve tables are included. (RL)

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Research Report: BCC 3-75

A Demographic Profile of Incoming Matriculated Students Spring, 1975

April, 1975

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A Demographic Profile of Incoming Matriculated Students Spring, 1975

Office of Institutional Research
April, 1975

Background

Each Fall the Office of Institutional Research produces an academic or scholastic profile of the class entering B.C.C., describing the scholastic preparedness and needs of the students. These data are culled from the University Applications Processing Center data tapes and from placement results on file in the College Computer Center.

Absent from these profiles has been information of a non-scholastic, non-cognitive, nature bearing on other kinds of characteristics, problems, and needs thought to be related to student progress at B.C.C. A recent comprehensive study completed by the Office of Institutional Research strongly suggests that certain non-cognitive "factors" are more highly related to continuation of enrollment at B.C.C. (inverse of "dropping-out") than cognitive or academic factors.[1]

The characteristics included in this Demographic Profile are sex, ethnic group, veteran status, age, income, proprietorship of household, size of household, primary language spoken as a child, parental education, educational aspiration level, satisfaction with B.C.C. curriculum, and counselling needs. Data on marital and employment status are available only for classes entering in Fall semesters.

In addition to the descriptive and analytical importance of these data, such information provides background for assistance in the interpretation of program and college "output". Trends in changes in distributions of these characteristics could alert college staff to the need for change in programs, staff, instructional techniques, other resources and services.

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1 "Cognitive and Non Cognitive Differences Between Persistors and Dropouts in a Freshman Class at Bronx Community College", Research Report BCC 1-75.

Demographic data of the kind reported in this Profile are also essential for the completion of the myriad grant applications submitted each year by the College.

For these basic reasons the Office of Institutional Research, with assistance from the Registrar and the Director of the Computer Center, has developed the Freshman Information Form (F.I.F.), which will be administered routinely to all incoming freshmen at the time they take the B.C.C. placement examinations. The F.I.F. is the source of most of the data presented in this profile.

While Spring demographic profiles will usually appear as separate reports, Fall profiles will be combined with the scholastic preparation profile, which has been issued each Fall.

Some Observations

The sex distribution of the class entering in the Spring of 1975 shows that for the first time since before the implementation of open admissions the number and proportions of male entrants significantly exceed the number and proportions of female entrants. This reversal of the normal Spring pattern is a function of the size of the veterans' group entering this semester. It can be seen that almost half of all males entering this semester are veterans. The College Office of Veterans' Affairs attributes this influx to recent liberalization in allowances granted to veterans enrolled in school. It is estimated that approximately 1,800 veterans are now enrolled at B.C.C., approximately 40% of all matriculated males. Just how this large representation of veterans

affects or will affect the college is not clear, though as a group it would seem that they would have more, different, or more intense needs and problems as compared with non-veterans.

The ethnic distribution shows that one out of two entering students is black, while an additional one out of three is Puerto Rican or Spanish surnamed. These proportions are only slightly higher than the proportions for all matriculated students in attendance at the college, suggesting that the college-wide ethnic group distribution will soon be comparable to the distribution of incoming students as reported here, that is, 50% black, 30% Puerto Rican-Spanish surname, 15% non-Spanish white-caucasian.

With regard to age, it may be seen that 62% of all entering students are above the age of 21, that is, the age at which students are normally expected to graduate from a four-year college. This compares with 9% of the students entering in Fall, 1970 who were over 21 years of age. This significant increase in the age of entering students is certainly related to the increase in the proportion of veterans entering the college, though it is not unrealistic to expect that the age of non-veteran entrants is also increasing because of the increasingly restricted employment market.

The data show that the majority of incoming students come from families where the total income is below $7,000, that is, less than $135 per week, and that the great majority of students live outside their parents' households, either in thier own households or in other households. Comparing the family income distribution of the current group of entering students with the income reported by students entering

in the Fall of 1970, very little difference between the two distributions may be seen.[1] Since inflation has significantly reduced actual dollar values below the 1970 level, it is evident that the current group of entering students come from less financially able families than students in the first open admissions class.

It is seen that 30% of the entering students were raised in homes where English was not the primary language. In the great majority of these cases Spanish is indicated as the primary language. It would appear, therefore, that a minimum of 30% of the incoming class of students may be considered bilingual.

Between 60%-65% of the parents of incoming students did not graduate from high school. In the 1970 American Council on Education survey it was found that about 56% of the parents of the incoming students did not graduate from high school. There is some indication, therefore, that there has been a slight decline in the educational background of incoming students from 1970 to the present. Mothers and fathers do not appear to differ significantly in the amount of formal education they received.

The great majority of entering students (75%) aspire to a minimum of a 4 year degree. In fact, one out of three entering students aspires to a master's, doctor's, or other professional degree. These are approximately the same proportions characterizing the Fall, 1970 entering class.

While 54% of the entering class state that they are satisfied with their B.C.C. curriculum, and only 5% avow dissatisfaction, 40% attest that they are uncertain about their curriculum placements. It is not clear why such a large proportion of students should be uncertain about their curriculum placements. Perhaps some of

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[1] 1970 data from the American Council on Education Survey for Fall, 1970.

these students were unable to be placed into the curriculum of their choice, or into the college of their choice, or perhaps some had not yet arrived at clear curriculum preferences in their own minds. It must also be borne in mind that the above proportions reflect the views of students prior to their actual attendance in classes, or prior to any actual experience in their assigned curriculums at B.C.C.

Financial counselling and academic-career counselling are the two strongest counselling needs expressed by the incoming students. One-half of all entering students indicate a need for counselling in each of these areas. One out of five students expresses a need for counselling (help) in regard to academic work. In view of the fact that approximately 75% of incoming students are placed into one or more remedial courses, the fact that only one in five students expresses an interest in academic help (counselling) may reflect a lack of student realism in the perception of their own educational handicaps. Such misperception could then result in extreme disappointment and shock when they are brought face to face with their academic deficits. This may point to the need for better counselling and preparation of students prior to their application or admission to a C.U.N.Y. unit.

NE:sb

Sex	N	%
Male	886	55.1
Female	723	44.9
	1609	100.0

Ethnic Group	N	%
Black	439	48.8
Puerto Rican	219	24.4
White	143	15.9
Other Spanish Surname	49	5.5
Oriental	9	1.0
American Indian	2	0.2
Other	38	4.2
	899	100.0

Veteran Status (Male)	N	%
Veterans	431	48.6
Non Veterans	455	51.4
Total (Matriculated)	886	100.0

Age Distribution
Spring 1975 Entering Matriculated Students

Age	N	Proportion	Cumulative Proportion
17	6	.005	.005
18	48	.038	.043
19	156	.122	.165
20	152	.119	.284
21	118	.092	.376
22	90	.070	.446
23	75	.059	.505
24	67	.052	.557
25	65	.051	.608
26	54	.042	.650
27	56	.044	.694
28	61	.048	.742
29	53	.042	.784
30	30	.023	.807
31 - 35	91	.071	.878
36 - 40	71	.056	.934
41 - 50	57	.045	.979
51 - 60	21	.016	.995
Over 60	6	.005	1.000
	1277		

Total household income during the past year.

	N	%
Less than $3,700	168	21.9
$3,700 - $4,999	105	13.7
$5,000 - $7,499	171	22.3
$7,500 - $9,999	128	16.7
$10,000 - $12,499	88	11.5
$12,500 - $14,999	38	4.9
$15,000 - $17,499	30	3.9
$17,500 - $19,999	18	2.3
$20,000 and over	22	2.9
	768	100.1

Household in which student lives

	N	%
Parents' household	348	38.1
Own household	477	52.2
Someone else's household	88	9.6
	913	99.9

Number of people living in student's household

Number in household	N	%	Number in household	N	%
1	95	10.5	7	33	3.7
2	178	19.7	8	23	2.5
3	200	22.1	9	9	1.0
4	178	19.7	9+	0	0.0
5	115	12.7	Total	904	100.0
6	73	8.1			

Primary language spoken in the home as a child

	N	%
English	654	70.6
Spanish	234	25.3
Italian	9	1.0
French	11	1.2
Hebrew or Yiddish	3	0.3
German	0	0.0
Slavic	3	0.3
Oriental	9	1.0
Greek	3	0.3
Other	0	0.0
	926	100.0

Highest educational level attained by father and mother

	Mother		Father	
	N	%	N	%
Not an elementary school graduate	140	17.5	129	16.2
Elementary school graduate	178	22.3	167	20.9
Some high school	224	28.0	214	26.8
High school graduate	181	22.7	221	27.7
Some college	41	5.1	47	5.9
College graduate	35	4.4	20	2.5
	799	100.0	798	100.0

Student's highest expected educational level

	N	%
1 year or less of college	25	2.8
2 year degree	204	22.7
4 year degree	358	40.0
5 year degree (Master)	213	23.7
Doctorate or other Professional degree	97	10.8
	897	100.0

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INFORMATION

Satisfaction with curriculum at Bronx Community College

	N	%
Satisfied	443	54.4
Uncertain	329	40.4
Dissatisfied	43	5.3

Marital Status - Available only in the Fall

Employment Status - Available only in the Fall

Requests for Counselling[1]

	N	%
Financial Aid	500	47.8
Help in Academic Work	229	21.9
Curriculum or Career	503	48.0
Medical-Health	25	2.4
Personal	35	3.3
Other	35	3.3
Total Requests from N=1047	1,327	Total percent greater than 100 since students were allowed to indicate more than one need.

[1] Names and addresses of students requesting specific counselling services have been submitted to the Department of Student Development.